

The Pragmatics of Romanticism. Edmund Burke as Art Theorist

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The article is devoted to the pragmatic aspects of Edmund Burke’s theory of art. The author identifies pragmatic components in the works of the British philosopher of various genres. The emphasis is on the interdisciplinary nature of Burke’s theory of art, which included artistic, psychological and political dimensions. The pragmatic dimension of Burke’s thought opens up a new field of research in the field of romantic aesthetics and art theory. The pragmatic romanticism of the British thinker complements our ideas about classical and modern art. His ideas shed new light on the development of Western European art from Baroque and classicism to avant-garde and postmodernism. At the same time, the problems of aesthetics, as well as the problems of power, are considered by Burke in a “psychoanalytic” and semiotic way, that is, without evaluation, and romantic special effects are subjected to objective analysis both in literature and art, and in politics. The pragmatic dimension allows us to redefine the role of Burke as the true founder of scientific art studies, who anticipated the most modern methods of analyzing artistic processes. The physiological, natural-scientific connotations of Burke’s work are also studied in the context of pragmatic strategies, as opposed to idealistic interpretations of the romantic theory of art.

Keywords: Edmund Burke, pragmatism, romanticism, modernism, theory of art, aesthetics, category of the sublime.

Despite his phenomenal fame, Edmund Burke (1729–1797) is one of the most underrated figures in European intellectual history. Traditionally, Burke’s contribution to humanitarian theory is reviewed in two different planes: he is considered one of the founders of aesthetic thought and the ancestor of philosophical and political conservatism. This article will treat Burke’s contribution to the theory of art. Thanks to the works of Jean-Francois Lyotard [1; 2], the research of the aesthetic part of Burke’s legacy received a new impetus. The category of the sublime, one of the most influential interpreters of which was Burke [3–8], once again became the focus of discussions about the essence and genealogy of the avant-garde and postmodernism [9]. Nevertheless, Lyotard’s writings, which are late romantic in their mood, as well as modern political studies of Burke’s “conservatism” [10–14], ignore perhaps the most valuable and original components of the British thinker’s legacy. It can be said that the pragmatic and semiotic aspects of his works, which are of paramount importance not only for the understanding of art and art

studies, were overshadowed by the popular images of Burke the romantic [15] and Burke the modernist [1].

It is the “theory of art” that turns out to be the key term here. The revision of German aesthetics and philosophy of art should also be carried out from the standpoint of pragmatism [16; 17], an intellectual tradition that allows us to see Burke’s legacy in a new light. The philosopher worked in the interdisciplinary space [18–26], concentrating on the problem of the unconscious in political and artistic discourses. The pragmatic approaches of the thinker cannot be adequately described using traditional terminology (romanticism, conservatism, aesthetics), since Burke proceeds from the need for an impartial study of the show business and myth design mechanisms in art and politics, rejecting, in fact, the usual dogmatic and idealistic interpretations.

Burke studied the semiotic aspects of “manipulation” as a problem of art theory. Appeal to the unconscious is a key element of this problem, regardless of the ideological preferences of researchers or “agents of history”. In this article, we suggest that it is not romanticism (the category of the sublime) or political radicalism itself that is interesting to Burke, but the mechanisms of functioning and reproduction of mythological and archaic models of thinking in modern society. At the same time, elements of archaic (subcritical) thinking can not only coexist with developed intellectualism, but also be used by the latter for its own purposes. The author thinks in pragmatic categories of reception-effect, rationally revealing the mechanisms of inclusion of the unconscious in political and artistic discourses. In our opinion, a new interpretation of the legacy of the British philosopher will be an important step towards rethinking both intellectual history and the history of art. In particular, the familiar concepts of archaic, romantic, classical and modern art will acquire a new meaning.

A remarkable example of Burke’s innovative formulation of the problem is his recipe for literary success analysis, transmitted by Rousseau to Hume [27, p. 459]. Attracting attention and techniques that help capture the public’s interest are practical issues that Burke develops. The artistic side of political rhetoric and the hypnotic function of art influencing the viewer’s unconscious are two sides of the same coin. “Unusual” for Rousseau is a technique designed for a wide, gullible audience and all means are good here. Burke lists the special effects that are used — “the marvellous of the heathen mythology”, “giants, magicians, fairies and heroes of the romance”, and, in the end, the unusual in life, politics and morality [27, p. 459].

The pragmatic aspect is especially noticeable in “Reflections on the Revolution in France”. But the comparison of poetry and painting in the “Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful” will be misunderstood outside the interdisciplinary space of Burke’s semiotics of art. We are talking about an attempt to define certain types of signs (clear/unclear) without ideological evaluation and outside moral categories as two equal languages. Burke speaks of some revolutionary events and statements as “works of art”, referring to populist, bad taste [27, p. 320–2]. The British philosopher drew attention to the romanticization of politics in the era of the French Revolution of 1789 and the endowment of left-wing discourse with sacred and demagogic elements.

In the *Philosophical Enquiry*... examples of “cold” and “hot” signs are given, by virtue of their structure appealing to the intellect or feelings of the viewer or reader. The emphasis

is on the difference between a sign (image or word) and an effect (reception). Milton's description of Death illustrates the Burke's theory of the sublime, which is close to the formless of Georges Bataille and Rosalind Krauss [28]: "The other Shape/If shape it might be called that shape had none/Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;/Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,/For each seemed either — black it stood as Night,/Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,/And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head/The likeness of a kingly crown had on" [29, p. 107]. Of course, the content of a political statement should not be evaluated from an artistic or moral point of view. But the artistic aspect of this statement may be the subject of special consideration. The "uncertainty", "vagueness", "sublimity" of a work of art is also a property of its iconic structure, regardless of possible ideological or ideological interpretations.

It is necessary to take into account the practical consequences (this is the position of pragmatism) of the impact of a particular sign system on the viewer or recipient. Therefore, the category of novelty — the central theme of the European aesthetics of the 18th century — is considered by Burke taking into account its functioning and use: "I believe, that, were Rousseau alive, and in one of his lucid intervals, he would be shocked at the practical frenzy of his scholars, who in their paradoxes are servile imitators, and even in their incredulity, discover an implicit faith" [27, p. 459]. Burke's concept, therefore, boils down to the fact that art is a device, a kind of rhetorical strategy (regardless of whether we accept the final conclusions concerning poetry and painting). French politicians use purely artistic rhetorical techniques, appealing not to reason, but to the feeling of the crowd. But the structural laws on which they rely also exist in art. Here they can be included in both elite and mass artistic strategies. Utopian, moralizing, techniques close to fantastic literature, which, in fact, proclaim the principles of a new religion, are used for various purposes. Burke's main rebuke to the French revolutionaries can be defined as the substitution of free thinking with a new faith and a new fanaticism [27, p. 443].

It is the category of the sublime, with all the ambiguity of its characteristics in Burke, that is responsible for the revolutionary terror: "But it is most certain, that their passions are very strongly roused by a fanatick preacher, or by the ballads of Chevy-chace, or the Children in the Wood, and by other little popular poems and tales that are current in that rank of life" [29, p. 109]. This is determined by a certain structure of the sign (fragmentation, incompleteness, obscurity) and can function within the framework of an elite culture. Burke talks about the psychological aspects of the revolution, a kind of projection of artistic fashion on the perception of political events. At the same time, Burke tries to separate art from politics, as humanitarian (virtual) and historical (real) spheres. The historical sphere should take into account not only moral arguments or artistic rhetorical special effects, but also the possibility of implementing a particular theory (morally or artistically convincing) in practice. The metaphors that Burke uses when describing historical events are purely artistic in nature: "boldly sketched" [27, p. 327–8], "great history-piece of the massacre of innocents" [27, p. 327–8].

The bloody performances of the revolution ignite the base instincts of the crowd. Art in this concept is not a "nightingale garden". In the hands of the vulgar "directors" of the revolution, it becomes a means of inciting the rabble, influencing its imagination. The boundary between politics and art is really conditional here, since the "spectacle" [27, p. 420], the "romantic performance" turns out to be an "argument" in making political

decisions. Burke's psychoanalysis indicates that the crowd is often guided not by the principle of its own benefit, but by irrational moments associated with the sphere of art. Atrocities turn into a primitive ritual, the kind of art available to the masses. As a natural scientist, Burke talks about the narcotic, almost physiological effects of art, anticipating the most modern psychological theories [30; 7; 21].

Burke does not deny the "romantic aesthetic", but neither does he idealize it. He describes various examples of its impact, which may differ in artistic perfection and do not carry an immediate social threat: Milton's description of Death, according to the British philosopher, "is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring, he has finished the portrait of the king of terrors" [29, p. 107]. At the same time, art that appeals only to the imagination is a problem for art theory. "Prejudices" and reliance on "imagination" are ineradicable and even useful in certain doses and proportions.

Therefore, from a pragmatic point of view, Burke talks about two types of mass culture — "bad" and "good", and, accordingly, about two types of romantic aesthetics (although romanticism can, as we found out, take elitist forms in Burke [27, p. 443]). The new mass culture of the Great French Revolution, according to the British philosopher, is a destructive, bloody Dionysian element [27, p. 326, 420], the triumph of obscurantism under the guise of scholarship and the victory of the plebs with the demagogic slogan of equality. It is difficult to suspect Burke of special sympathies for religion, in his aesthetic essay he even compares the special effects of despotic rule with the impact of temple architecture [29, p. 107]. But religion can be more or less free from prejudice. In this it is no different from atheism, which can also take fanatical and irrational forms. Revolutionary thinking for Burke is the same religion, therefore we need to make a choice between two forms of mass culture based on irrational principles.

Burke's pragmatic view is that our thinking is too complex process for its irrational components to be eliminated simultaneously. Politics, religion and the arts often form strange hybrids, sometimes acting under secular or rational slogans. Not only art, but also politics follow the logic of show business and myth design. Burke's conclusion is simple — if we want to enjoy art, illusions, the "sublime", special effects, then there is an artistic sphere for this. It is dangerous and unreasonable to build the practical side of our life according to the laws of art or following purely artistic, emotional impressions. Burke is free here from the idealistic confusion of "truth", "goodness" and "beauty" [27, p. 313]. For him, art has a tremendous power of influencing people's minds, largely "shaping" religion and politics, but it remains just art.

In a certain sense, political discourse is inseparable from various "arts" and PR technologies, but it is nothing more than a set of rhetorical, acting and staging techniques that distract attention from the pragmatic essence of political struggle. These techniques can be studied as a kind of self-sufficient artistic sphere, but their influence on real politics can be disastrous. Public opinion can be mistaken and very bloodthirsty under the influence of certain "purely artistic" impressions, therefore, the correct organization of society implies a very complex system of checks and balances. Thus, Burke follows the same pragmatic Machiavellian logic, which he formally denies for the sake of appearance [27, p. 338].

From politics, according to Burke, one should not expect “a great change of scene”, “a magnificent stage effect”, “a grand spectacle” [27, p. 317]. All this is far from the pragmatic essence of political differences, although it can have a huge impact on real politics. This virtual aesthetic sphere can force an uneducated person to act contrary to their own material interests, destroying their well-being. But a person with critical thinking is able to separate the real legal or economic consequences of a particular political initiative from its artistic shell.

Another interesting example of the reception of romantic aesthetics is the characterization of the mythological figure of genius in Burke’s early “Notebook”. “Myth” replaces “genius”, this fabulous character with scholarship, talent, decency, common sense. The mechanisms of idealization of these people depend on the prevailing prejudices in society and resemble the perception of the speeches of “authoritative” preachers in religious sects (the main thing is “fortitude”, and not the specific content of a particular statement) [31, p. 63–5]. Eccentricity, inconstancy and amorality are considered as symptoms of genius among the general public, despite the possibility of reproducing such stereotypes in their behavior for selfish purposes. Thus, the romantic image was placed by Burke in a pragmatic context in the middle of the 18th century.

The British art theorist is interested in the gap between external and internal: “external”, sign, signified can “refer to nothing” (be an information dead end for a certain category of viewers), or refer to “incorrect” meanings, signified, provoke “double interpretations”, errors in communication. Thanks to fashion, stereotypical ideas about genius are formed in society, the standard of a genius’s lifestyle. Therefore, “external signs” can be imitated by acting, which is the main problem for the theory of art — a form of theatricalization of social and artistic life for pragmatic purposes.

The concept of romantic genius is replaced by his eccentric social image, freedom from all norms of decency. The need for such figures, the public demand for “extravagance” gives rise to a similar situation of imitation of certain behaviors. Burke emphasizes the artistic, theatrical component of the dichotomy of genius and his fans and emphasizes that antisocial, shocking forms of behavior are easily converted into success with the general public [31, p. 63–5].

Burke also talks about the forms of corruption of scientific knowledge in connection with the concept of genius. The cult of a “genius scientist” can be structured according to the laws of show business or religious sects that are at war with each other. The philosopher describes new mechanisms of public opinion formation that identify elements of extravagance and eccentricity as signs of genius. What are the ways to verify scientific knowledge in such a situation? — the philosopher asks this question. Instead, we are dealing with the social interface of a genius, ways to legitimize his behavior and romanticize his work. Of course, Burke does not oppose genius as such; nor does he advocate certain normative ideas. But how to define a genius? Who will be appointed a genius? It is always a question of power, the power of public opinion and partly the power of prejudice. The cult of genius can acquire irrational forms, resembling the cult of a saint, a mythological character [31, p. 63–5].

Modernization leads to the appearance of an increasing number of people who neglect the rules. There is a rule of refutation of rules, a fashion for deviant forms of behavior. Burke drew attention to the ways of valorizing scientific, political or artistic activity.

These are mechanisms for the redistribution of power within the scientific community, resembling the creation of a religious hierarchy. Every flaw of a genius turns out to be a virtue for a group of his admirers. Thus, we are dealing with theatrical forms of scientific and social behavior. But these theatrical forms of behavior are not new and are rooted in more archaic structures of society. By themselves, they are inevitability; they do not necessarily imply the existence of criminally punishable fraudulent schemes.

Regarding the problem of romantic genius in science or art (“the man of spirit” [31, p. 63–5]) Burke considers the problem of symbolic capital from a pragmatic standpoint. There are geniuses. There are geniuses with oddities. But the presence of oddities is not a guarantee of genius. This kind of show business is based on the concept of authority, belief in the infallibility of a particular character. There is nothing wrong with this, as long as this whole “entertainment industry” does not invade the scientific, legal and political spheres. High art also involves a very complex mechanism for determining and verifying its quality. Burke describes cases when the reputation of a genius is won with the help of artistic, performance strategies. This reputation is built on faith in an incomprehensible gift and is not subjected to critical analysis [31, p. 63–5].

Thus, the topic that Burke touches on is not directly related to likes or dislikes in relation to romanticism or conservatism. We are talking about a detached, semiotic reading of the iconic structures of modern society and contemporary art, in which theatricality plays an important role. Long before the controversy about totalitarianism, Burke drew attention to the reanimation of archaic rituals of mass hysteria and pseudo-religious worship in a civilized and extremely developed society. The contamination of artistic and political discourses has a long history and it is impossible to replace old myths with new ones.

The category of the sublime, which Burke explored, is also associated with the opposition of critical and mythological thinking, but is not limited to the rejection of intellectualism. Nevertheless, the most important connotation of the category of the sublime, as, indeed, of any type of art based on the power of imagination, in the 18th century was “nationality”, “folklore”, belonging to the lower strata of society with undeveloped critical thinking and having no access to education. Imagination can develop at the expense of intelligence and vice versa, it was believed in the age of Enlightenment. This does not mean a complete discrediting of the imagination as such, but indicates the virulent properties of the sublime, which were openly discussed at all stages of the development of romantic aesthetics. David Hume wrote: “The coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person, familiarized to superior beauties, would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting” [32, p. 141].

Similar connotations are also present in Burke’s arguments about the sublime: “The most powerful effects of poetry and music have been displayed, and, perhaps, are still displayed, where these arts are but in a very low and imperfect state” [29, p. 77]. The category of the sublime based on “fear and awe” is not necessarily integrated into complex intellectualist strategies and therefore is easily combined not only with “high” modern, but also with archaic ancient and folklore art [29, 70–9]. Art appealing to the unconscious is not new. The news is the developed psychological and psychoanalytic theories of art,

an example of which are Burke's texts evaluating the mechanisms of functioning and impact of such art. The inclusion of the "unconscious", the violent emotional reaction of the audience, the hypnotic effect of art is by no means a guarantee of its high quality or beneficial social consequences. But the connection of art with deliberately "incomplete" iconic structures that create the effect of ambiguity is not evaluated by Burke as something negative by definition.

Fear, the companion of the sublime, according to Burke, according to his theory, is an attribute of power and masculinity [29, p. 114]. Examples of the sublime, which are given by him, are not only the "ultra modernist" and "romantic" of the 17th century John Milton [29, p. 107, 208], but also religious texts, veneration of the chief and folk ballads [29, p. 77, 109, 114, 116], — are associated with him with strength, danger, wild nature: "The horse in the light of an useful beast, fit for the plough, the road, the draft; in every social useful light, the horse has nothing sublime: but it is thus that we are affected with him, whose neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth that it is the sound of the trumpet?" [29, p. 113].

Burke emphasizes that the mythology of the despotic regime is based on the category of the sublime, which excludes any idealization of this category on the part of the British philosopher [29, p. 107]. Burke also associates the power of religious influence with the same category [29, p. 107]. The sublime, as well as flirting with the unconscious, is thus not evaluated unambiguously as part of elitist, intellectualist or socio-critical strategies, as Lyotard [2] tries to present it, but is not condemned as an allegedly always vicious technique (mechanism of influence) of mass art [29, p. 70–9, 105–32].

The category of the sublime is traditionally associated with the development of romantic aesthetics. Burke's legacy is usually interpreted as the beginning of the evolution of romantic ideas (pre-romanticism). Such a historicist scheme seems to be a great simplification. It obscures the understanding of the works of the British philosopher, who places the sublime in a broad context — the study of the unconscious in archaic and modern thinking. Burke was one of the discoverers of the unconscious, anticipating the work of Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich. What we understand by the "semiotic aspects" of Burke's texts simultaneously "includes" Lyotard's argumentation and refutes his philosophy of art. The works of the British thinker are closer to the pragmatic trends of postmodernism (deconstructivism).

Burke's reputation as a conservative became an obstacle for appreciation of his contribution to the semiotics of art and pragmatic philosophy. Political science falls into the trap of the dichotomy of right and left ideology, while the British thinker concentrates on the manipulative and rhetorical possibilities of fine art and fine literature, ways of influencing consciousness in artistic and political discourses. Burke's works were largely exploratory and non-evaluative in nature; the mechanisms of functioning of the unconscious and the means of its activation in art and politics are revealed with a clear attraction to physiological and psychological theories.

Romanticism is considered by Burke largely outside the usual ideological oppositions, as a semiotic playing field capable of generating the most refined and the most vulgar political and artistic phenomena. Such figures as Byron or Napoleon, as well as many phenomena of the twentieth century, demonstrated the importance of an interdisciplinary

social field for Romanticism. The rhetorical means of influence described by Burke, first of all — the effect of novelty, give the key to understanding modernist aesthetics. But even here Burke maintains “neutrality”, the detached position of one of the founders of the scientific theory of art. Modernism/Romanticism with its almost primitive ritual effects, according to Burke is not “bad” and not “good”, not “elitist” and not “populist”, not “religious” and not “secular”. But the study of its iconic, structural features allows us to take a fresh look at many social processes. Here Burke, defending the principles of the autonomy of art, approaches the theory of modernism by Clement Greenberg, who emphasized the importance of the means of expression (medium) of art for its critical understanding in the context of social reality [33; 34].

The sublime is not the “property” of Romanticism. And it is not only an artistic category for Burke. It is unlikely that when evaluating his texts, one can limit oneself only to references to a certain nomenclature of stylistic terms. The meaning of his texts goes beyond the romanticism of the 18th–19th centuries. It is no accident, for example, that the classicism theorist Boileau translated the treatise of the ancient theorist Pseudo-Longinus “On the Sublime” into French and modernized the romantic intentions of antiquity in his work within his own version of classical aesthetics. The theory of art should focus on these problematic points of convergence of styles that allow us to see classical and modern art in a new light.

Of course, Burke did not limit himself to interpreting Romanticism as a “mass culture” (to use modern terminology), revealing possible parallels with archaic rituals. In this sense, the identification of romantic components in revolutionary politics (a methodology that partly anticipated Carl Schmitt’s “Political Romanticism”) seems a natural step. Burke should be brought out of the shadow of German idealistic aesthetics and recognized as a key figure for theoretical art studies. His analysis of the category of the sublime in the interdisciplinary space of art, politics and sexuality can be considered exemplary in many respects. For Burke, art is not an “object”, but a “state”, a “drug” capable of influencing our psychosomatics. The irrational nature of human desires and fantasies is considered by him as a scientist in various contexts of social and artistic life.

The concept of the sublime Burke is close to the “formless” of Georges Bataille and Rosalind Krauss. But the significance of the British thinker is determined not only by the fact that he anticipated the aesthetics of Romanticism, modernism, postmodernism. He chose a critical, rational method of research that allowed the deconstruction of the “special effects” of these artistic trends. However, Edmund Burke is undoubtedly not the only representative of the classical era whose methods resemble modern sociology and semiotics of art. Burke’s pragmatism has long been hidden under the masks of conservatism and religiosity, romanticism and pre-romanticism, avant-garde and post-avant-garde. But the censorship restrictions that have existed to one degree or another in all epochs should not distract us from the essence of Burke’s intellectual discoveries. Studying art from a pragmatic standpoint, as a technique and a sign system, a means of influence and manipulation, Burke, like Sigmund Freud, made a significant contribution to the “disenchantment of the world”.

Burke’s semiotic pragmatic approach is quite compatible with romantic strategies. This is demonstrated by his own texts — for example, his criticism of the theory of proportions and the apology of the landscape park [29, p. 139, 142–3]. It can be suggested

that the semiotics of art and pragmatism developed simultaneously with romantic trends, entering into bizarre combinations with it. Burke's theory, closely related to his time, is relevant not only as an example of enlightenment romanticism or pre-Romanticism. As a model, it exists in the nineteenth century (the synthesis of the semiotic approach and Romanticism in Delacroix's theory of art), as well as in the formalist and semiotic theories of the twentieth century.

The pragmatic consideration of art from the point of view of the categories of novelty, reception and effect in Burke's theory indicates the development of prerequisites for the formation of scientific art studies. The psychologization of key aesthetic and artistic categories in his theory of art anticipates a departure from abstract idealism in contemporary art and literary studies. The emphasis is on the perception of a work of art as a sign and the problems of its reception. This pragmatic perspective of the study inevitably had to lead to a comparison of aesthetic politics with political "art" (political technologies). Critical attitude to romantic techniques is not a consequence of the "immaturity" of Burke's theory, its belonging to pre-Romanticism.

Burke talks about the means of art, the consequences of its impact, its quality (complexity or simplicity of perception) beyond ideological, idealistic or ontological limitations. We are talking about signs, psychology of perception, emotional and artistic effects. The signifier and the signified, the sign and its effect (possible meanings) are clearly separated, forming a scientific methodological system. The analysis of the romantic figure of genius or romantic politics of the era of the Great French Revolution demonstrates the interdisciplinary possibilities of this approach.

The semiotics of Burke's art allows us to see in a new light the use of the ancient rhetorical tradition in the age of Enlightenment. Baroque, classicist, romantic and rocaille techniques can be interpreted not only from the standpoint of "expressionistic" art studies, but also from the point of view of quite modern, intellectualist semiotic approaches that already existed at that time. A clear separation of romantic effects in the context of mass and elite culture in Burke is also the most important indicator of the development of theoretical approaches of that time. Art is differentiated, the advantages and specifics of its various forms are noted. The assimilation of art to ritual, including in a political context, also anticipates modern pragmatic theories from Walter Benjamin and Ieremia Ioffe to Georges Didi-Huberman and Horst Bredekamp.

As a theorist of Romanticism, Burke is of paramount importance for understanding the artistic processes of Modern and Contemporary times. They were closely connected with sophisticated forms of art theory, the development of which cannot be identified only with the idealistic trends of German philosophy and German-language art studies. Romanticism had not only idealistic, but also pragmatic dimensions, which were often combined in the work of the same author, in the same work. The Age of Enlightenment was also not devoid of a romantic dimension, which should not be discriminated against as a supposedly marginal phenomenon. The "natural science" view of Romanticism presented in Burke's works is continued in numerous examples of the synthesis of fiction and positivism in the art of the 19th–20th centuries.

Romanticism was not naive. He could include the most cynical manipulative strategies of playing with the viewer, influencing his unconscious. Kitsch, folklore, and countercultural motifs were considered as rhetorical means of influence, regardless of

ideological content. Using Burke's example, it becomes obvious that the development of the scientific theory of art could not remain aloof from the study of the romantic "inner world". But from the very beginning, the "philosophy of life" was intertwined with semiotic methods of reading "signs of the soul" in a broad pragmatic context.

Burke's theory of art allows us to interpret the problem of expression (worldview) in a broader sense. The former rigid, organic (ontological) structure (the external as a reflection of the internal) gives way to more flexible strategies for studying the processes of social and artistic mimicry, adaptation, imitation. Burke's humanities deal with "fiction", which is invented for one or another pragmatic purpose (even if it is often only about symbolic capital). This is how the interdisciplinary space of his theory of art arises, which closely approaches Walter Benjamin's theory of aura, Thomas Mitchell's iconology and other similar projects. Burke's semiotic theory highlights the problem of interpretation — any sign turns out to be ambiguous, requiring deciphering, and our reaction to it is obviously subjective and unreliable. Nevertheless, there is no alternative to this process of personal interpretation: art remains a "world of uncertainty", "anesthesia" and "intoxication", requiring the latest pragmatic — psychological and sociological methodologies.

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